

WOMT Summary for 4/15/2008:

The Smelt Working Group continued its recommendation that the Projects maintain a 7-day average Old & Middle River flow more positive than -2,000 cfs for the coming week (4/16-4/22).

The USFWS determined that a -2,500 cfs OMR target, subject to certain conditions, would adequately protect delta smelt until the beginning of VAMP on April 22nd. Until that time, the projects may continue operating to a -2,500 cfs target under the following conditions: (1) increases in total project pumping would be limited to no more than 1,000 cfs on any given day, and (2) the target OMR flow would revert to -2,000 cfs if (a) combined adult delta smelt salvage were to exceed 24 over the next seven days, or (b) delta smelt young-of-the-year (larvae or juveniles) were to be detected at either facility on any two days. USFWS determined that if the more restrictive OMR target is triggered, returning to the -2,000 cfs target would minimize the risk to adult delta smelt in the central Delta from being transported into the south Delta or becoming entrained at the export facilities.

The Department of Fish and Game determined that the -2,500 cfs OMR target would be adequately protective of longfin smelt, subject to certain conditions. Increases in total project pumping would be limited to no more than 1,000 cfs on any given day, and the target OMR flow would revert to -2,000 cfs if combined adult longfin smelt salvage were to exceed 24 over the next seven days. Longfin smelt larvae and juveniles (age 0 fish) have been detected at the CVP in both the larval sampling and in routine salvage sampling on 4/11-4/15. DFG noted that age 0 longfin smelt appear to be broadly distributed, albeit at relatively low densities, throughout the upper estuary and Delta based on the results of 20-mm survey #2. (Survey #3 has been completed and samples are being processed.) Outflow has increased recently and will aid in transporting young fish from the Delta to the west. Current OMR values are approximately -1,500 cfs, with Delta outflow controlling. VAMP is expected to begin on Tuesday, April 22nd. An increase in longfin smelt salvage is typical for April. However, to date the number of age 0 longfin smelt observed in daily salvage remains very low and in light of their distribution the consequence of current entrainment levels is low. Accordingly DFG determined a trigger to change the OMR limit based on daily detections of age 0 longfin smelt (larvae and juveniles) in salvage samples is not necessary. This determination is subject to immediate reconsideration if the daily salvage of age 0 longfin smelt (larvae or juveniles) increases markedly.

The count for the adult salvage and YOY (age 0) detection for both species will begin again on Wednesday, April 16th.